



United Way of Connecticut

2-1-1

Appropriations Committee - Public Hearing

March 11, 2010

Testimony Presented by United Way of Connecticut

My name is Richard Porth. I serve as the CEO of United Way of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today about the March 1, 2010 Deficit Mitigation Plan.

The Governor's latest deficit mitigation plan, released on March 1st, includes a recommendation to suspend (cut) the balance of funds in this current fiscal year for HUSKY Infoline. This would have the effect of moving up the proposed elimination of all HUSKY Infoline funding from July 1st to April 1st. We continue to work for the restoration of HUSKY Infoline funding for the year beginning July 1, 2010; and we remain hopeful that this can be achieved because of the support of community and health care system leaders and key legislators.

Maintaining HUSKY Infoline funding for the balance of this year and through FY11 is right for Connecticut because HUSKY Infoline:

- Provides knowledgeable, multilingual telephone care coordinators ready to advocate for HUSKY clients to get the health care they need and to navigate the HUSKY Program.
- Provided assistance to 52,000 families in FY09 which represents an increase of 25% over the previous year.
- Served approximately 43% of HUSKY households statewide in FY09.
- Received 60,699 incoming calls and made over 44,740 outbound calls.
- Costs \$0.15 per member per month based on current funding of \$671,000, which is a very modest investment in helping the HUSKY system work more cost effectively.
- The staff is a trusted resource among all HUSKY partners who rely on its expertise to help clients navigate the various health plans, vendors, and carve outs that comprise the HUSKY program. Health care providers, MCO's, the HUSKY enrollment broker, and DSS staff all make many calls and referrals to HUSKY Infoline.

Here are some examples of how HUSKY Infoline helps HUSKY clients:

- Assisted 525 children to get re-enrolled in HUSKY after losing coverage, potentially saving taxpayers/ratepayers over \$1.1 million. Research indicates that medical costs associated with each child who disenrolls from Medicaid/SCHIP is \$2,121 per year.
- Assisted 2,005 members with finding a doctor.
- Assisted 725 members with filling prescriptions.
- Assisted 1,916 members with resolving medical bills.
- Assisted 2,502 members with finding a dentist.

The Department of Social Services has relied on HUSKY Infoline to assist with the implementation of frequent changes to the program such as the managed care transition, pharmacy and dental carve-outs, and the federal citizenship regulations. Given the current budget crisis and proposed HUSKY cuts, the need is greater than ever for assistance to be available for families who need help navigating the ever-changing program.

It would be penny-wise and pound-foolish to eliminate HUSKY Infoline at any time, whether on April 1st (which the deficit mitigation plan would do) or July 1st (which the Governor's midterm budget adjustments recommend). HUSKY Infoline provides valuable benefit to HUSKY clients and it enables the entire HUSKY system to work better, particularly during times of substantial changes in eligibility, benefits, and operations.

Please maintain funding for HUSKY Infoline.

Thank you.